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Viewing cable 06TELAVIV3155, LEBANON: NATAN SHARANSKY DISCUSSES HIZBALLAH,

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06TELAVIV3155	2006-08-11 07:11	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Tel Aviv

Appears in these articles:

[not](#)
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null
Carol X Weakley 08/11/2006 04:51:07 PM From DB/Inbox: Carol X Weakley

Cable
Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L

TEL AVIV 03155

SIPDIS
CXTelA:

ACTION: POL

INFO: RES ECON DCM DAO AMB AID ADM RSO IPSC PD IMO
CONS

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: DCM:CRETZ
DRAFTED: CONS:BHURST
CLEARED: POL:NOLSEN/SCROWLEY

VZCZCTVI127
PP RUEHC RUEHXX

DE RUEHTV #3155/01 2230711
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 110711Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5543
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 003155

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/10/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PTER](#) [LE](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: NATAN SHARANSKY DISCUSSES HIZBALLAH,
HAMAS, AND DEMOCRACY WITH CODEL ROYCE

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Gene A. Cretz for reasons 1.4 (B and D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Likud Knesset member Natan Sharansky met with Representative Ed Royce on August 10 and discussed the current conflicts with Hizballah and Hamas as well as the longer term prospect for democracy in the Middle East. Sharansky said that he is not surprised by Hizballah's strong resistance because the Israeli army was not prepared for the type of warfare it now faces. He speculated that it might make more sense to strike at what he claimed is the source of the problem, in this case, the three or four army bases in Syria from which he said Hizballah is supplied. Sharansky was critical of current diplomatic negotiations, saying that Hizballah will emerge as a winner if even a fraction of the organization survives. He maintained that the entire Knesset believes that the proposed multinational or a UNIFIL-plus force in Lebanon will be "a disaster." He said that if such a force is not strong enough it will not only fail, but it will also hinder Israel's ability to respond to future provocations. Sharansky discussed the political situation in the Palestinian territories and the importance of openly embracing dissidents across the region to lend legitimacy for the struggle against authoritarian regimes. Rep. Royce was accompanied by Mrs. Royce, as well as staffers Thomas Sheehy, Edward Burrier, and Brian Diffell. End Summary.

Military and Diplomatic Struggles in Lebanon

¶2. (C) Sharansky said the only benefit of the Lebanese conflict is that it is happening now instead of in the future. He claimed that the GOI should have better foreseen Hizballah's strength, since the group has had six years to train, acquire supplies from Iran and Syria, and build a complex network of entrenchments and fortifications across southern Lebanon. He expressed regret that the Israeli army had not fully prepared for its current difficult task. He noted that the army is trained to fight conventional enemies, and suggested that it might have made more sense to bomb what he claimed are the three or four army bases in Syria from which he said Hizballah draws its supplies. He added, however, that Israel is not ready to expand the conflict and reap the opprobrium of international public opinion by taking such steps. Sharansky maintained that Israel is already losing the public relations battle; every bombed residential building and civilian casualty increases pressure to end the conflict. He blamed Hizballah for forcing the IDF to use such tactics. While special operation raids like the recent one in Tyre minimize civilian casualties, he added, it is not feasible to cover the hundreds of enemy targets solely through such means.

¶3. (C) Sharansky maintained that the entire Knesset believes that the proposed multinational or a UNIFIL-plus force in Lebanon will only make it more difficult for Israel to respond to future provocations. He was skeptical that the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) could protect even itself from Hizballah. He cautioned that Hizballah would become mixed in with the army. He expressed concern that the most likely contributors to a UN force are either too weak or lack the

political will to confront Hizballah. He insisted that the only chance for peace is to have a strong Chapter VII force. Barring such a robust force, Sharansky said, Israel would uproot Hizballah before turning the area over to a UNIFIL-plus contingent. He said he supports the Israeli cabinet's move to expand ground operations up to the Litani river, adding that considerable time is required for Israeli forces to fulfill their objectives.

¶4. (C) Sharansky warned that Hizballah will emerge even stronger if even a small part of the organization survives. He said that Hizballah should not be allowed to participate in the Lebanese government, adding that concessions to terrorists will only encourage and strengthen extremists.

Democracy and Elections in the Middle East

¶5. (C) Sharansky was critical of holding elections in the West Bank and Gaza without first developing democratic institutions and increasing support for civil society. He said it was a mistake to put all hopes and funding into the hands of the Palestinian Authority, a corrupt authoritarian regime. In his view, elections presented the Palestinian population with a choice between a despised corrupt government and Hamas. He regretted that a democratic alternative had virtually no chance, since it had neither Western financial support nor funding from terrorist sources. Sharansky advocated a policy of funding outside of government channels, fostering economic development and free enterprise, and exerting political pressure to prevent the Palestinian Authority from clamping down on civil society.

¶6. (C) In response to questions from the CODEL, Sharansky said that economic development in the Palestinian areas is key to establishing the conditions for peace. He added that such steps must take place within the Palestinian communities, because there will be few opportunities for Palestinians to work within Israel.

¶7. (C) Sharansky urged the USG to openly embrace dissidents throughout the Middle East and end its support for authoritarian regimes. He suggested that the President consider inviting dissidents to the White House. True change, he insisted, relies upon the ability of dissidents to openly express their opinions. Sharansky cautioned against any negotiations with terror sponsors such as Iran and Syria, insisting that such talks only buy these regimes additional time. Likewise, he said, it is a "waste of time" to engage in talks with terror groups such as Hizballah and Hamas.

¶8. (U) CODEL Royce did not clear this message.

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JONES